

June 11, 2015

Via FOIAonline to:

Regional Freedom of Information Officer
U.S. EPA, Region 3
1650 Arch Street (3CG00)
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Re: FOIA Request for Public Records Related to Pollution from the
Fayette Thermal facility (Fayette Thermal) and at State Correctional
Institution Fayette (SCI Fayette) in LaBelle, Pennsylvania

Dear FOIA Officer:

I write on behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) to request disclosure of records pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and applicable Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations at 40 C.F.R. § 2.100-2.406 . This letter describes the records sought and includes a request for a public interest fee waiver.

I. Description of Records Sought

Please produce all records¹ as follows, generated since January 1, 1997, in EPA's possession, custody or control:

- 1) Any records related to environmental permits for SCI Fayette, including but not limited to permits for the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, or disposal of waste;
- 2) Any records related to dust or pollutants in ground water, surface water, drinking water, air, or soil on the premises of SCI Fayette or the surrounding areas, including, but not limited to, areas within one mile of the facility;

¹ 1 "Records" means anything denoted by the use of that word or its singular form in the text of FOIA and includes correspondence, minutes of meetings, memoranda, notes, emails, notices, facsimiles, charts, tables, presentations, orders, filings, and other writings (handwritten, typed, electronic, or otherwise produced, reproduced, or stored). This request seeks responsive records in the custody of any EPA office, including, but not limited to, EPA Headquarters offices, and specifically including EPA offices in possession of responsive records.

- 3) Any records related to complaints, investigations, sampling, testing, monitoring, violations, or enforcement concerning dust or pollutants in ground water, surface water, drinking water, air, or soil on the premises of SCI Fayette or the surrounding areas, including, but not limited to, areas within one mile of the facility;
- 4) Any records related to environmental permits for Fayette Thermal, including but not limited to permits for air emissions;
- 5) Any records related to dust or pollutants present in, or originating from, (a) Fayette Thermal; or (b) vehicles transporting materials to or from Fayette Thermal;
- 6) Any records related to complaints, investigations, sampling, testing, monitoring, violations, or enforcement concerning dust or pollutants present at, or originating from, (a) Fayette Thermal; or (b) vehicles transporting materials to or from Fayette Thermal;
- 7) Any records related to health effects associated with dust or pollutants (a) present in, or originating from, Fayette Thermal; (b) originating from vehicles transporting materials to or from Fayette Thermal; or (c) in ground water, surface water, drinking water, air, or soil on the premises of SCI Fayette or the surrounding areas, including, but not limited to, areas within one mile of the facility.

Please produce responsive records in electronic form where possible.

II. Request for a Fee Waiver

NRDC requests that EPA waive any fee it would otherwise charge for search and production of the records described above. FOIA requires that requested records be provided without charge “if disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii); *see also* 40 C.F.R. §2.107(l)(1). The requested disclosure would meet both of these requirements. In addition, NRDC qualifies as “a representative of the news media” entitled to a reduction of fees under FOIA. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(II); *see also* 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(c)(1)(iii).

A. NRDC Satisfies the First Fee Waiver Requirement

The disclosure requested here would be “likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii); *see also* 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(l)(1). Each of the four factors used by

EPA to evaluate the first fee waiver requirement indicates that a fee waiver is appropriate for this request. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(l)(2).

1. Subject of the request

The records requested here involve sites regulated by EPA under the Clean Air Act (CAA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) that may be producing air emissions or generating, transporting, treating, storing, or disposing of hazardous wastes that adversely impact the health of individuals employed or incarcerated at SCI Fayette or living in the surrounding community. The requested records thus directly concern “the operations or activities of the government.” 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(l)(2)(i).

2. Informative value of the information to be disclosed

The requested records are “likely to contribute to” the public’s understanding of government operations and activities. EPA, 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(l)(2)(ii). The public does not currently possess comprehensive information regarding the federal government’s regulation of air emissions from Fayette Thermal or hazardous wastes in or around SCI Fayette. There is more than a reasonable likelihood that these records have informative value to the public in light of recent media scrutiny of the significant adverse health impacts of environmental pollutants on individuals employed and incarcerated at SCI Fayette and living in the surrounding community. *See infra* Section A.4; *see also* *Citizens for Responsibility & Ethics in Washington v. U.S. Dep’t of Health & Human Servs.*, 481 F. Supp. 2d 99, 109 (D.D.C. 2006).

We believe that the records requested are not currently in the public domain. For example, EPA’s Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) database indicates that an Air Emissions Inventory is taken for Fayette Thermal; however, that inventory is not publicly available, leaving the public with no information as to what kinds of pollutants are released from this facility. *See* EPA, ECHO Detailed Facility Report for Fayette Thermal, <http://echo.epa.gov/detailed-facility-report?fid=110022404281&redirect=echo> (last visited Mar. 12, 2015). Similarly, although SCI Fayette is listed as an “active” RCRA site, there is no publicly available information about the kinds or quantities of hazardous materials at the site. *See* EPA, ECHO Detailed Facility Report for SCI Fayette, <http://echo.epa.gov/detailed-facility-report?fid=110020745611&redirect=echo> (last visited Mar. 12, 2015).

Disclosure of the requested records would thus meaningfully inform public understanding with respect to regulation of air emissions from Fayette Thermal or hazardous wastes associated with SCI Fayette, and the impacts of such emissions and wastes on the health of individuals employed or incarcerated at, or living near, SCI Fayette. However, if EPA were to conclude that some of the requested records are publicly available, NRDC would like to discuss that conclusion and might agree to exclude such records from this request.

3. Contribution to an understanding of the subject by the public is likely to result from disclosure

Because NRDC is a “representative of the news media,” as explained in Part II.C below, EPA must presume that this disclosure is likely to contribute to public understanding of its subject. 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(l)(2)(iii).

However, even if NRDC were not a media requester, NRDC’s expertise in environmental pollutants and their health impacts, extensive communications capabilities, and proven history of dissemination of information of public interest—including information obtained from FOIA records requests—indicate that NRDC has the ability and will to use disclosed records to reach a broad audience of interested persons with any relevant and newsworthy information the records reveal. There is a strong likelihood that disclosure of the requested records will increase public understanding of the subject matter. *See Judicial Watch, Inc. v. Rossotti*, 326 F.3d 1309, 1314 (D.C. Cir. 2003) (finding that a requester that specified multiple channels of dissemination and estimated viewership numbers demonstrated a likelihood of contributing to public understanding of government operations and activities).

NRDC intends to disseminate any newsworthy information in the released records and its analysis of such records to its member base and to the broader public, through one or more of the many communications channels referenced below. NRDC has frequently disseminated newsworthy information to the public for free, and does not intend to resell the information requested here. NRDC’s more than one million members and online activists are “a broad audience of persons interested in the subject” of health impacts of environmental pollutants, 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(l)(2)(iii), and when combined with NRDC’s communications to the public at large, the likely audience of interested persons to be reached is certainly “reasonably broad,” 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(l)(2)(iii). As NRDC’s long history of incorporating information obtained through FOIA into reports, articles, and other communications illustrates, NRDC is well prepared to convey to the public any relevant information it obtains through this records request.

NRDC has the ability to disseminate information collected from this FOIA request through many channels. As of December 2014, these include, but are not limited to the following:

* NRDC’s website, available at <http://www.nrdc.org> (homepage at Att. 1), is updated daily and draws approximately 1,200,000 page views and 690,000 unique visitors per month.

* OnEarth magazine (sample issue at Att. 2) is published as a bimonthly digital magazine, and is available free of charge at <http://www.onearth.org>. The site is updated regularly and also includes Earthwire, a daily newsfeed (Att. 3). It receives more than 82,000 unique visitors per month.

* Nature's Voice newsletter on current environmental issues (sample issue at Att. 4) is distributed four times a year to NRDC's more than one million members and online activists, and is available online at <http://www.nrdc.org/naturesvoice/default.asp> (Att. 5).

* Activist Network email list (sample email at Att. 6) includes more than 735,000 members who receive biweekly information on urgent environmental issues. This information is also made available through NRDC's online Action Center at <http://www.nrdc.org/action/default.asp> (Att. 7).

* NRDC This Week is a monthly electronic environmental newsletter distributed by email to more than 63,000 subscribers, at <http://www.nrdc.org/newsletter> (Att. 8).

* "Switchboard," available at <http://switchboard.nrdc.org> (Att. 9) is a staff blogging site that is updated daily and features more than 250 bloggers writing about current environmental issues. The blogs draw approximately 154,000 page views and 127,000 unique visitors per month; Switchboard's RSS feeds have approximately 11,150 subscribers; and Switchboard posts appear on websites of other major internet media outlets, such as "The Huffington Post," at <http://www.huffingtonpost.com> (sample post at Att. 10).

* NRDC's profiles on "Facebook," at <http://www.facebook.com/nrdc.org> (Att. 11), and "Twitter," at <http://www.twitter.com/nrdc> (Att. 12), are updated daily and have approximately 278,000 fans and 151,000 followers, respectively.

*NRDC issues press releases, issue papers, and reports; directs and produces movies, such as *Stories from the Gulf*, narrated by Robert Redford, and *Acid Test*, narrated by Sigourney Weaver; participates in press conferences and interviews with reporters and editorial writers; and has approximately forty staff members dedicated to communications work.

*NRDC employees provide Congressional testimony; appear on television, radio, and web broadcasts and at conferences; and contribute to numerous national newspapers, magazines, academic journals, other periodicals, and books. A few examples are provided below:

- Research article, "The requirement to rebuild US fish stocks: Is it working?" *Marine Policy*, July 2014 (co-authored by NRDC Oceans Program Senior Scientist Lisa Suatoni and Senior Attorney Brad Sewell) (Att. 13);
- Issue brief, "The Untapped Potential of California's Water Supply: Efficiency, Reuse, and Stormwater," June 2014 (co-authored by NRDC Water Program Senior Attorney Kate Poole and Senior Policy Analyst Ed Osann) (Att. 14); see

also “Saving Water in California,” N.Y. Times, July 9, 2014 (discussing the report’s estimates) (Att. 15);

- Article, “Waves of phony charges over new clean water safeguards,” The Hill, June 17, 2014 (by NRDC Executive Director Peter Lehner) (Att. 16);
- Article, “Don’t Buy the Smear of the EPA,” L.A. Times, June 3, 2014 (by NRDC President Frances Beinecke) (Att. 17);
- Transcript, “Conservationists Call For Quiet: The Ocean Is Too Loud!” Nat’l Pub. Radio, All Things Considered, July 28, 2013 (featuring NRDC Marine Mammal Protection Program Director Michael Jasny) (Att. 18);
- Testimony of David Doniger, NRDC Climate and Air Program Policy Director and Senior Attorney, before the United States House Subcommittee on Energy and Power, June 19, 2012 (Att. 19);
- Article, “Pollution Still a Hazard to U.S. Beaches,” CBS, CBS NEWS, July 29, 2009 (featuring former NRDC Water Program Co-Director Nancy Stoner) (Att. 20);
- Conference brochure, “World Business Summit on Climate Change,” May 24-26, 2009 (featuring former NRDC Director for Market Innovation Rick Duke at 9) (Att. 21);
- Article, “Is there a ‘proper level’ of compliance with environmental law?” Trends: ABA Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources Newsletter, Jan./Feb. 2008 (authored by NRDC Senior Attorney Michael Wall) (Att. 22);
- NRDC Document Bank, <http://docs.nrdc.org/> (Att. 23).

NRDC routinely uses FOIA to obtain information from federal agencies that NRDC legal and scientific experts analyze in order to inform the public about a variety of issues, including energy policy, climate change, wildlife protection, nuclear weapons, pesticides, drinking water safety, and air quality. Some specific examples are provided below:

(1) In April 2014, NRDC relied on FOIA documents for a report on potentially unsafe chemicals added to food, without the safety oversight of the Food and Drug Administration or the notification of the public. The report, titled Generally Recognized as Secret: Chemicals Added to Food in the United States, reveals concerns within the agency about several chemicals used as ingredients in food that manufacturers claim are “generally recognized as safe” (Att. 24). See also Kimberly Kindy, “Are secret, dangerous ingredients in your food?” Wash. Post, Apr. 7, 2014 (discussing NRDC’s report) (Att. 25).

(2) NRDC obtained, through FOIA, FDA review documents on the nontherapeutic use of antibiotic additives in livestock and poultry feed. In January 2014, NRDC published a report, titled *Playing Chicken with Antibiotics*, which is based on the documents obtained, and reveals decades of hesitancy on FDA's part to ensure the safety of these drug additives (Att. 26). See also P.J. Huffstutter and Brian Grow, "Drug critic slams FDA over antibiotic oversight in meat production," Reuters, Jan. 27, 2014 (discussing NRDC's report) (Att. 27).

(3) NRDC has used White House documents obtained through FOIA and from other sources to inform the public about EPA's decision not to protect wildlife and workers from the pesticide atrazine in the face of industry pressure to keep atrazine on the market. See *Still Poisoning the Well: Atrazine Continues to Contaminate Surface Water and Drinking Water in the United States*, <http://www.nrdc.org/health/atrazine/files/atrazine10.pdf> (Apr. 2010) (update to 2009 report) (Att. 28); see also William Souder, "It's Not Easy Being Green: Are Weed-Killers Turning Frogs Into Hermaphrodites?" *Harper's Bazaar*, Aug. 1, 2006 (referencing documents obtained and posted online by NRDC) (Att. 29).

(4) NRDC incorporated information obtained through FOIA into a report, available at <http://www.nrdc.org/wildlife/marine/sound/contents.asp>, on the impacts of military sonar and other industrial noise pollution on marine life. See *Sounding the Depths II: The Rising Toll of Sonar, Shipping and Industrial Ocean Noise on Marine Life* (Nov. 2005) (update to 1999 report) (Att. 30). The report also relied upon and synthesized information from other sources. Since the report's publication, the sonar issue has continued to attract widespread public attention. See, e.g., "Protest Raised over New Tests of Naval Sonar," *Nat'l Pub. Radio, All Things Considered*, July 24, 2007 (transcript at Att. 31).

(5) NRDC scientists have used information obtained through FOIA to publish analyses of the United States' and other nations' nuclear weapons programs. In 2004, for example, NRDC scientists incorporated information obtained through FOIA into a feature article on the United States' plans to deploy a ballistic missile system and the implications for global security. See Hans M. Kristensen, Matthew G. McKinzie, and Robert S. Norris, "The Protection Paradox," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, Mar./Apr. 2004 (Att. 32).

(6) NRDC obtained through FOIA, and made public, records of the operations of the Bush administration's Energy Task Force, along with analysis of selected excerpts and links to the administration's index of withheld documents (Att. 33). NRDC's efforts cast light on an issue of considerable public interest. See, e.g., Elizabeth Shogren, "Bush Gets One-Two Punch on Energy," *L.A. Times*, Mar. 28, 2002, at A22 (Att. 34).

(7) Through FOIA, NRDC obtained a memorandum by ExxonMobil, advocating the replacement of the sitting head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,

and used the document to help inform the public about what may have been behind the Bush administration's decision to replace Dr. Robert Watson. See NRDC Press Release and attached Exxon memorandum, "Confidential Papers Show Exxon Hand in White House Move to Oust Top Scientist from International Global Warming Panel," Apr. 3, 2002 (Att. 35); Elizabeth Shogren, "Charges Fly Over Science Panel Pick," L.A. Times, Apr. 4, 2002, at A19 (Att. 36).

(8) Through FOIA and other sources, NRDC obtained information on nationwide levels of arsenic in drinking water and used it in a report, *Arsenic and Old Laws* (2000), available in print and online at <http://www.nrdc.org/water/drinking/arsenic/aolinx.asp> (Att. 37). The report guided interested members of the public on how to learn more about arsenic in their own drinking water supplies. *Id.*; see also Steve LaRue, "EPA Aims to Cut Levels of Arsenic in Well Water," San Diego Union-Tribune, June 5, 2000, at B1 (referencing NRDC report) (Att. 38).²

As these examples demonstrate, NRDC has a proven ability to digest, synthesize, and quickly disseminate information gleaned from FOIA requests to a broad audience of interested persons. Therefore, the requested records disclosure is likely to contribute to the public's understanding of the subject.

4. Significance of the contribution to public understanding

The records requested shed light on a matter of considerable public interest and concern: environmental pollutants, including toxic coal ash, that may cause adverse health impacts to individuals employed or incarcerated at, or living near, SCI Fayette. Numerous recent press reports have highlighted public concern about this issue. *See, e.g.,*

- Exhibit A (Abolitionist Law Center, *No Escape: Exposure to Toxic Coal Waste at State Correctional Institution Fayette*, September 2, 2014, <https://abolitionistlawcenter.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/no-escape-3-3mb.pdf>);
- Exhibit B (Emily Atkin, *40 Million Tons of Toxic Coal Waste Sit Next to Prison with 'Alarming Rates of Illness*, ThinkProgress, September 5, 2014, <http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2014/09/05/3563772/coalwasteprisonercancer/>);

² There are numerous other examples of national news articles that were based in part on documents NRDC obtained through FOIA. *See, e.g.,* Felicity Barringer, "Science Panel Issues Report on Exposure to Pollutant," N.Y. Times, Jan. 11, 2005 (Att. 39); Katharine Q. Seelye, "Draft of Air Rule is Said to Exempt Many Old Plants," N.Y. Times, Aug. 22, 2003 (Att. 40); Don Van Natta, Jr., "E-Mail Suggests Energy Official Encouraged Lobbyist on Policy," N.Y. Times, Apr. 27, 2002 (Att. 41).

- Exhibit C (Christine Haines, *Environmental Issues Concern Corrections Officers*, The Herald-Standard, February 11, 2015, http://www.heraldstandard.com/new_today/environmental-issues-concern-corrections-officers/article_595c6283-8a3b-5715-8e51-c8baa51e4d54.html);
- Exhibit D (Don Hopey, *Groups Say Fly Ash near State Prison in Fayette County Causing Health Problems*, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 2, 2014, <http://www.post-gazette.com/news/health/2014/09/02/Groups-say-fly-ash-near-state-prison-in-Fayette-County-leads-to-health-problems/stories/201409020040>);
- Exhibit E (David DeKok, *Report Blames Coal Ash for Cancers at Pennsylvania Prison*, Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/02/us-usa-pennsylvania-prison-idUSKBN0GX26F20140902>);
- Exhibit F (Christine Haines, *Herald-Standard Continues Battle for Prison Cancer Information*, January 11, 2015, The Herald-Standard, http://www.heraldstandard.com/new_today/herald-standard-continues-battle-for-prison-cancer-information/article_f72784b2-321e-5a08-9c8f-0aa42f10e938.html);
- Exhibit G (Don Hopey, *State, Corrections Union Investigate Health at Prisons by Coal Sites*, September 17, 2014, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/south/2014/09/17/Officials-investigate-health-at-prisons-by-coal-sites/stories/201409170030>);
- Exhibit H (CorrectionsOne Staff, *Advocates: Fly Ash near State Prison Causing Health Problems*, September 2, 2014, CorrectionsOne, <http://www.correctionsone.com/correctional-healthcare/articles/7522279-Advocates-Fly-ash-near-state-prison-causing-health-problems/>);
- Exhibit I (Emily Petsko, *Report Alleges Link between Fly Ash, Health Problems at SCI-Fayette*, September 5, 2014, The Observer-Reporter <http://www.observer-reporter.com/article/20140905/NEWS01/140909723>);
- Exhibit J (Scott Beveridge, *Human Rights Groups to Launch a Health Survey at SCI-Fayette*, February 11, 2015, The Observer-Reporter <http://www.observer-reporter.com/article/20150211/NEWS01/150219916>);
- Exhibit K (Rich Lord, *Pennsylvania Officials Refute Claims State Prison in Fayette County is Unhealthy*, December 31, 2014, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette <http://www.post-gazette.com/local/south/2014/12/31/State-report-refutes-claims-that-state-prison-in-Fayette-County-is-unhealthy/stories/201412310248>);

- Exhibit L (Christine Haines, *Group Alleges Connection between Coal Ash and Prison Illnesses*, September 4, 2014, The Herald-Standard, http://www.heraldstandard.com/news/local_news/group-alleges-connection-between-coal-ash-and-prison-illnesses/article_e758fc37-edc9-5044-89e1-76310b10f7ce.html).

As these examples demonstrate, there is public concern regarding toxic pollutants at and near SCI Fayette, and regarding the adverse health effects that these pollutants may be having on the individuals employed or incarcerated there, or living nearby. Public understanding of these issues would be significantly enhanced by disclosure of the requested records concerning EPA regulation of air emissions from Fayette Thermal and hazardous wastes at or around SCI Fayette. Disclosure would help the public to more effectively evaluate whether and how pollution from Fayette Thermal and at or around SCI Fayette affects the individuals employed or incarcerated at SCI Fayette, or living nearby. Disclosure would also help the public to better understand and evaluate how EPA's actions (or inaction) on air emissions from Fayette Thermal and hazardous wastes at or around SCI Fayette affect the health of individuals employed or incarcerated at, or living nearby, SCI Fayette.

B. NRDC Satisfies the Second Fee Waiver Requirement

Disclosure in this case would also satisfy the second prerequisite of a fee waiver request because NRDC does not have any commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii); 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(l)(1), (3). NRDC is a not-for-profit organization and does not act as a middleman to resell information obtained under FOIA. "Congress amended FOIA to ensure that it be 'liberally construed in favor of waivers for noncommercial requesters.'" *Rossotti*, 326 F.3d at 1312 (internal citation omitted); see *Natural Res. Def. Council v. United States Env'tl. Prot. Agency*, 581 F. Supp. 2d 491, 498 (S.D.N.Y. 2008). NRDC wishes to serve the public by reviewing, analyzing, and disclosing newsworthy and presently non-public information about pollutants that may cause adverse health impacts to individuals employed or incarcerated at, or living nearby, SCI Fayette. As noted at Part II.A, EPA's regulation of air emissions from Fayette Thermal or hazardous wastes associated with SCI Fayette relates to a matter of considerable public interest and concern. Disclosure of the requested records will contribute significantly to public understanding of pollution from Fayette Thermal and at SCI Fayette and associated threats to human health and the environment.

C. NRDC Is a Media Requester

Even if EPA denies a public interest waiver of all costs and fees, NRDC is a representative of the news media entitled to a reduction of fees under FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii), and EPA's FOIA regulations, 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(c)(1)(iii); *see also* 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(b)(6) (defining "[r]epresentative of the news media"). A representative of the news media is "any person or entity that gathers information

of potential interest to a segment of the public, uses its editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distributes that work to an audience.” 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii); *see also Elec. Privacy Info. Ctr. v. Dep’t of Def.*, 241 F. Supp. 2d 5, 6, 11-15 (D.D.C. 2003) (a “non-profit public interest organization” qualifies as a representative of the news media under FOIA where it publishes books and newsletters on issues of current interest to the public); Letter from Alexander C. Morris, FOIA Officer, United States Dep’t of Energy, to Joshua Berman, NRDC (Feb. 10, 2011) (Att. 42) (granting NRDC media requester status).

NRDC is in part organized and operated to gather and publish or transmit news to the public. As described earlier in this request, NRDC publishes a bimonthly digital magazine, OnEarth, which has won numerous news media awards, including the Independent Press Award for Best Environmental Coverage and for General Excellence, a Gold Eddie Award for editorial excellence among magazines, and the Phillip D. Reed Memorial Award for Outstanding Writing on the Southern Environment. NRDC also publishes a regular newsletter for its more than one million members and online activists; issues other electronic newsletters, action alerts, public reports and analyses; and maintains free online libraries of these publications. *See* EPA, 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(b)(6) (“Examples of news media include . . . publishers of periodicals.”). NRDC maintains a significant additional communications presence on the internet through its staff blogging site, “Switchboard,” which is updated daily and features more than 250 bloggers writing about current environmental issues, and through daily news messaging on “Twitter” and “Facebook.” *See* OPEN Government Act of 2007, Pub. L. No. 110-175, § 3, 121 Stat. 2524 (2007) (codified at 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)) (clarifying that “as methods of news delivery evolve . . . such alternative media shall be considered to be news-media entities”). The aforementioned publications and media sources routinely include information about current events of interest to the readership and the public. To publish and transmit this news content, NRDC employs approximately forty staff members dedicated full-time to communications with the public, including accomplished journalists and editors. These staff members rely on information acquired under FOIA and through other means. Public interest organizations meeting the requirements “are regularly granted news representative status.” *Serv. Women’s Action Network v. Dep’t of Def.*, 888 F. Supp. 2d 282, 287-88 (D. Conn. 2012) (according media requester status to the American Civil Liberties Union).³

Information obtained as a result of this request will, if appropriately newsworthy, be synthesized with information from other sources and used by NRDC to create and disseminate unique articles, reports, analyses, blogs, tweets, emails, and/or

³ To be a representative of the news media, an organization need not exclusively perform news gathering functions. If that were required, major news and entertainment entities like the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) would not qualify as representatives of the news media. This country has a long history, dating back to its founding, of news organizations engaging in public advocacy.

other distinct informational works through one or more of NRDC's publications or other suitable media channels. NRDC staff gather information from a variety of sources—including documents provided pursuant to FOIA requests—to write original articles and reports that are featured in its OnEarth magazine, newsletters, blogs, and other NRDC-operated media outlets. *See Cause of Action v. Fed. Trade Comm'n*, 961 F. Supp. 2d 142, 163 (D.D.C. 2013) (explaining that an organization can qualify for media-requester status if it “distributes work to an audience and is especially organized around doing so”). NRDC seeks the requested records to aid its own news-disseminating activities by obtaining, analyzing, and distributing information likely to contribute significantly to public understanding, not to resell the information to other media organizations.

III. Willingness to Pay Fees Under Protest

Please provide the records requested above regardless of your fee waiver decision. In order to expedite a response, NRDC will, if necessary and under protest, pay fees in accordance with EPA's FOIA regulations at 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(c)(1)(iv) for all or a portion of the requested records. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 2.107(l)(4). Please contact me before doing anything that would cause the fee to exceed \$100. NRDC reserves its rights to seek administrative or judicial review of any fee waiver denial.

IV. Conclusion

Please email or (if it is not possible to email) mail the requested records to me at the NRDC office address listed below. Please send them on a rolling basis; EPA's search for—or deliberations concerning—certain records should not delay the production of others that EPA has already retrieved and elected to produce. *See generally* 40 C.F.R. § 2.104 (describing response deadlines). If EPA concludes that any of the records requested here are publicly available, please let me know.

Please do not hesitate to call or email with questions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
/s/ Margaret Hsieh
Natural Resources Defense Council
40 W. 20th St., 11th Floor
New York, NY 10011
(212) 727-4652
mhsieh@nrdc.org

Enclosures:
Attachments 1 through 42 (single .pdf file)
Exhibit(s) A through L (single .pdf file)